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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines the special educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children and youth who are also diagnosed as having behavior disorders (BD). Following an introductory chapter, chapters 2 and 3 address the specific populations of Asian Americans (usually underrepresented in the BD population) and African Americans (usually overrepresented). Discussion centers on internalizing behaviors typical of Asian Americans and the externalizing behaviors of African Americans. Chapter 4 provides information on theoretical models for becoming culturally competent in the assessment process. It argues that there are biases inherent in assessment instruments and practices and these biases need to be accounted for accordingly by culturally competent evaluators. Chapter 5 looks at effective instruction for urban, impoverished CLD students with behavioral disorders. A case is made for direct instructional approaches for improvements in both academic and social behaviors. In the sixth chapter, an argument is made for a collaborative home-school relationship predicated on cultural sensitivity, communication, and mutual respect. In the final chapter, the perspective of a parent of a CLD student is offered. (Contains 125 references.) (DB)

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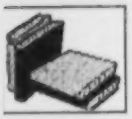

From the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Behavioral Disorders

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Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students with Behavioral Disorders

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Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

CCBD is an international and professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children and youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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Foreword

In schools across the country, we are witnessing significant demographic changes in the student population. Data show that there is an increasing number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in both general and special education. The long-standing debate over what is special about special education has been rekindled as school personnel struggle to ensure that a heterogeneous population of students receives high-quality instruction. The challenges are many and varied. Concerns about misidentification may have surpassed those of underidentification—especially when we simultaneously look at the numbers that relate to diversity and disability. Diversity is an issue not only in regard to overrepresentation and underrepresentation of students in various disability groups, but also in regard to the delivery of high-quality instruction. There are those who would argue that a limited body of empirical research poorly informs current teacher preparation and classroom practices. Others assert that students who are variously labeled as *emotionally disturbed, behaviorally handicapped,* or *emotionally or behaviorally disordered* are especially susceptible to inappropriate placement and ineffective practices. It is difficult to refute these assertions.

Most education professionals recognize that we must view these challenges as opportunities as well. We must forthrightly address the complex issues surrounding cultural competency, parent involvement in education, high-quality academic and nonacademic intervention, and the judicious use of emergent technology. We also recognize that we cannot afford to ignore the special challenges of serving students with emotional or behavioral disorders placed in

interim alternative educational settings or correctional facilities. Rapidly changing social, philosophical, political, and economic forces compel us to examine current policies and practices critically and to repudiate any that do not serve all our students well.

The following books comprise the Fourth CCBD Mini-Library Series: Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Programs That Work, which derived from the 2001 international conference sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders:

- *Addressing the Issue of Disproportionate Representation: Identification and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders* by Festus Obiakor, Bob Algozzine, Martha Thurlow, Nomsa Gwalla-Ogisi, Stephen Enwefa, Regina Enwefa, and Angela McIntosh
- *The Challenges of Gangs and Youth Violence in the Schools* by Sharon H. Grant and Richard Van Acker
- *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners with Behavioral Disorders* by Gwendolyn Cartledge, Kai Yung (Brian) Tam, Scott A. Loe, Antoinette H. Miranda, Michael Charles Lambert, Cathy D. Kea, and Evette Simmons-Reed
- *Dealing with Behaviors Perceived as Unacceptable in Schools: The Interim Alternative Educational Setting Solution* by Reece L. Peterson and Carl R. Smith
- *Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice: Recommended Practices* by Robert B. Rutherford, Mary Magee Quinn, Peter E. Leone, Lili Garfinkle, and C. Michael Nelson
- *Integrating Technology in Program Development for Children and Youth with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders,* edited by Lynn K. Wilder and Sharon Black
- *Strategies and Procedures for Designing Proactive Interventions with a Culturally Diverse Population of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders and Their Families/Caregivers* by Gloria D. Campbell-Whatley and Ralph Gardener, III

As series editors, we solicited members of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders from across the country to share their thoughts on a range of critical issues regarding students with emotional or behavioral disorders. We are indebted to our colleagues who have so generously given both their time and expertise to making this mini-library possible. We trust that their efforts will contribute to your success and the success of the students with whom you work.

Lynda M. Bullock
University of North Texas

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1 Introduction

By the year 2050, it is projected that one half of the U.S. population will be of Hispanic American, African American, Native American, or Asian/Pacific American descent, and there will be proportionate increases of children of color in our schools (Council of Economic Advisers, 1998). Along with this growing diversity, we will see increasing numbers of impoverished students who will experience inequitable educational outcomes (Montgomery, 2001), special challenges in terms of academic and social learning (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2000), and disproportionate representation in special education (Yates, 1998). Together, these conditions underscore the need for cross-cultural competence by service providers in identifying, diagnosing, and providing treatment programs for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children and youths.

Proportionality for CLD students in special education has been debated in the professional literature for at least 3 decades. Within the area of behavioral disorders (BD), some students of color are underrepresented while others are overrepresented. Asian Americans, for example, are underrepresented except in Hawaii; Native Americans show slight overrepresentation in Alaska, North and South Dakota, and Montana; and African Americans evidence overrepresentation nationally, with percentages within BD programs (26.4%) that are nearly double their proportions in the schools (14.8%) (USDE, 2000; Oswald, Coutinho, Best, & Singh, 1999; Singh, Ellis, Oswald, Wechsler, & Curtis, 1997; Toppo, 2001). Thus, issues surrounding proportionality and cultural competence within BD programs are perhaps most salient for students of Asian and African descent, who are substantially under- and overrepre-

sented, respectively. Students who are either underserved or poorly served are especially vulnerable for negative school and adult outcomes.

Students whose culture and language differ from that of the school professionals are likely to have their behaviors misperceived and to be subjected to preconceived stereotypes. Cultural competence is critical to accurate student diagnosis and placement. Along with identification, issues of service delivery for CLD students within BD programs can be legitimately questioned. Instead of creating environments in which they learn more adaptive behaviors to maximize their schooling, these students are often further victimized by excessively punitive disciplinary policies and an irrelevant curriculum of control (Cartledge, Tillman, & Talbert-Johnson, 2001; Townsend, 2000).

Chapters 2 and 3 of this monograph address the specific populations of Asian Americans and African Americans. For both of these groups, there is the issue of cultural competence in identification and diagnosis; however, for Asian Americans the discussion centers more on internalizing behaviors, while for African Americans the issue is largely a matter of interpreting externalizing behaviors appropriately. Stereotyped by the image of the "model minority," Asian American students, who are expected to excel academically, often are overlooked, and their emotional and behavioral needs go unattended. These students are further hampered by a culture that is resistant to acknowledging emotional problems and to seeking help outside of the family. Service providers are given specific recommendations related to understanding the culture of Asian American learners, the manifestation of behavior problems, and ways they might be determined. Similar issues exist for African American students; however, because they are characterized by externalizing behaviors, not only are they overrepresented, but also the reactions by the schools tend to be counterproductive.

Assessment and diagnostic procedures are key to any discussion of cultural competence and students with behavioral disorders. The school psychologist is pivotal to the diagnostic process and needs to be skilled in viewing the learner's behavior through a cultural

prism. Chapter 4 provides information on theoretical models for becoming culturally competent in the assessment process. The authors argue that there are biases inherent in assessment instruments and practices and that culturally competent evaluators are aware of these elements and will account for them accordingly. It might be argued that even more important than assessment is the point of service delivery in terms of classroom instruction.

Chapter 5 looks at effective instruction for urban, impoverished CLD students with behavioral disorders. Not only has classroom instruction been deemphasized for this population, but they also have been the recipients of the least effective instructional strategies. A case is made for direct instructional approaches for improvements in both academic and social behaviors.

In Chapter 6, the author presents a strong argument in support of a collaborative home–school relationship predicated on cultural sensitivity, communication, and mutual respect. In Chapter 7, we hear from a parent of a culturally diverse student and gain a different perspective on issues surrounding learning and behavior.

2 Issues of Disproportionality for Asian/Pacific American Learners

Kai Yung (Brian) Tam
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The number of children and youths who receive special education has increased approximately 139% since the 1980s. Today, children with disabilities represent approximately 10.8% of the school-age population. About 91% of students in special education are in four disability categories: emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, mentally retarded, and speech and language impaired. There is growing recognition that culturally and linguistically diverse learners are both overrepresented and underrepresented in these categories of special education (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Ford, 1998). For instance, African Americans are overrepresented in programs for students with mild mental retardation and with emotional disturbance. Hispanic Americans are overrepresented in programs for students with learning disabilities. However, Asian/Pacific Americans are underrepresented in all disability categories but are overrepresented in programs for gifted and talented students. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1997), although 3% of the total school population is Asian/Pacific American, only 0.7% of students identified as

having an emotional disturbance (ED) are Asian/Pacific Americans. This figure compares to African Americans, who make up 24% of the population of students identified as having ED but comprise only 16% of the total student population, and to Latino/Hispanic Americans, who make up only 7% percent of the population identified with ED but comprise 12% of the total student population.

Many Asian/Pacific Americans are overwhelmed by numerous social and economic hardships that are common to all ethnic and cultural groups found in the United States. It is possible that services have not been provided to Asian/Pacific American learners because of the perceptions held by the general public that Asian/Pacific Americans in general are the "model minority." That is, they quickly achieve success in both education and later occupations. In this chapter, we use the term *disproportionality* to refer to the underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific American students who are classified as having emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) in relation to their percentage in general education or the percentage of other groups with E/BD. Asian/Pacific Americans are not a homogeneous group; rather, they consist of groups with diverse national origins, socioeconomic status, languages, and religions. The nationalities of Asian/Pacific Americans include Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Indian, and Vietnamese. In what follows, I will first identify variables that may cause the underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific American students in special education, and then offer recommendations to help ensure more accurate identification of Asian/Pacific American learners.

Possible Contributing Variables

Several variables may contribute to the underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific American learners in special education.

Denial of Disability

When a child is born with or later diagnosed as having a disability, Asian/Pacific American parents often exhibit mourning, grief, and depression. Some parents may perceive their child's disabilities as a

result of their own or family failures or of something they did wrong in the past. Many Asian/Pacific American families have little knowledge of their children's disabilities, and, due to their own low literacy level, parents often do not know how or may not want to share their concerns with the school system.

Emphasis on School Success

In many Asian cultures, parents often make sacrifices so that their children can have a better future. They look at education as the primary means for their children's future success and expect their children to preserve and enhance the good names of their families. Therefore, parents are likely to perceive their children's successes or failures as their own. As a result, many Asian/Pacific American parents are reluctant to discuss their children's problems with school personnel or to seek help from the system. To maintain the family's good name, many Asian/Pacific American parents deny the existence of a disability in their children and attempt to handle the problem alone. Seeking professional help would openly acknowledge the disability and result in bringing shame and disgrace to the family name. On the other hand, many Asian/Pacific American parents expect their children to maintain their cultural heritage of respect, hard work, responsibility, and family honor, so parents often push their children to the limit. When their children exhibit behavior problems, the parents often use strict discipline to manage the problem behaviors.

Limited Attention to Underrepresentation

Unlike the overrepresentation of other culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education programs, underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific Americans in such programs seldom draws much attention. While there is some discussion in the professional literature, there have been few attempts to determine the causes of the underrepresentation. Some might argue that the low incidence of Asian/Pacific Americans in special education programs means that these students are doing well in school. Many school personnel perceive Asian/Pacific American students as model students. Overall, their academic performance is equal or superior to that of their European American counterparts. Therefore, according to this argu-

ment, underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific American learners receiving special education service should not be of concern.

Limited Teacher Competence with Asian Families

Many teachers in American schools do not have adequate training to work with Asian/Pacific American parents. In many cases, home–school communication is limited since many Asian/Pacific American parents do not actively participate in school events. When teachers attempt to make referrals for evaluation for possible special education placement, many Asian/Pacific American parents will not meet with school personnel. Some Asian/Pacific American parents do not meet with education personnel because American schools can be intimidating to parents who are not well educated and whose English is limited. However, student evaluation by the multidisciplinary team cannot occur without parental consent.

Misleading Stereotypes

Teachers' level of tolerance, ability to deal with behavioral problems, and expectations related to student behavior can influence the referral process. Sometimes, the students' ethnic background, physical attractiveness, and gender may influence teachers' judgments (Kauffman, Cullinan, & Epstein, 1987; Shinn, Tindal, & Spira, 1987; Wilson & Bullock, 1989). Many teachers have developed the notion that Asian/Pacific American learners are "model students among minorities." They think of them as hardworking, goal oriented, high achieving, docile and obedient, seldom displaying discipline problems, and never requiring special education services. For that reason, school personnel tend not to refer Asian/Pacific American students for special education services even when the students exhibit behavioral problems.

Teachers of Asian/Pacific American learners are more concerned about the students' language abilities than their behavioral problems. Thus, they believe that the behavioral problems of many Asian/Pacific American students stem from their limited English proficiency and poor educational backgrounds. Seeking ways to improve the English proficiency of Asian/Pacific American students often dictates teachers' instructional priorities. Instead of making

referrals for assessment, teachers may recommend that students be placed in English language development programs; other student needs may be overlooked. It is easier to identify problems of language proficiency than to assess students' emotional and behavioral status. Many teachers and Asian/Pacific American parents are satisfied when students are doing well in math and science, although they may have serious needs in other academic subject areas and/or in social skills areas.

Limited Competence with Culturally Specific Behaviors

The process of evaluating students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds for emotional disturbance is often viewed as subjective, complicated, and sometimes a controversial issue (Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 1989). Asian/Pacific American children with E/BD may go undetected because teachers are not sensitive to and are not adequately trained to deal with the students' unique behavioral characteristics (e.g., respect for authority, restraint in emotional expression, self-control). Sometimes, it is difficult for school personnel to justify whether the behavioral problems of an Asian/Pacific American student are severe enough to make a referral for evaluation. This is particularly true when the demeanor of Asian/Pacific American students is reserved and modest and they do not stand out from other children in the classroom who display more serious problems (e.g., physical aggression). Very often, teachers tend to refer students who exhibit conduct disorders (e.g., physical fights, verbal abuse) and pay less attention to students who are reserved, anxious, and withdrawn.

Recommendations

There is little question that parental participation often helps improve students' learning. Accordingly, teachers should encourage parents to get involved with the schools and help them overcome their anxiety and fear of our schools. Teachers need to develop and maintain two-way communication to share concerns about the child's welfare. Focus should be primarily on the child's strengths, rather than his or her weaknesses.

Awareness of Cultural Distinctions

Teachers who work with Asian/Pacific American students should be able to distinguish among different ethnic groups of Asian/Pacific Americans. Each ethnic group has its own culture. Teachers who understand that the same approach cannot be used to interact with parents of Asian/Pacific American learners from different ethnic backgrounds will be more successful in communicating with parents. While working with parents, it is culturally insensitive and inappropriate to assume that various ethnic groups of Asian/Pacific Americans are alike.

Cultural Respect

Teachers need to recognize that there might be significant differences between their own views of discipline and childrearing and those of their students' parents (e.g., cultural mores dictating behavior toward authority figures, making eye contact, touching or being touched, responses to questions, praise, rewards or punishment). Therefore, teachers should not insist that their views are the only ones that are correct and acceptable; rather, they must be sensitive to cultural differences regarding discipline and childrearing. At the same time, teachers should use an approach that is effective, fair, and ethical. For example, they should make Asian/Pacific American parents feel that they are not to be blamed for their child's problems. When parents feel blamed, they will shift their focus from the needs of their children to a defense of themselves.

Knowledge of Behavioral Disorders

Teachers need to know that there are two types of disordered behavior: externalizing and internalizing (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000). Examples of externalizing behavior include striking out against others, teasing, yelling, refusing to comply with requests, destructiveness, vandalism and extortion, and aggression. Internalizing behavior involves mental or emotional conflicts such as depression, anxiety, immaturity, and withdrawal. Conduct disorders often receive immediate attention from school personnel. However, not all of the students who are classified as having E/BD exhibit externalizing behaviors. Many Asian/Pacific American students may exhibit

internalizing behaviors, which might easily be mistaken for reserve and modesty.

Awareness of Culturally Specific Stressors

School personnel should be aware of the potential disabling nature of internalizing behaviors of Asian/Pacific American students. Rigorous parental discipline and expectations and pressure to achieve academically and conform to the "model minority" stereotype often place enormous stress on Asian/Pacific American students. Sometimes, many students feel guilty that they are failing or not living up to parental expectations when they cannot achieve superior academic performance. This pressure may lead to depression, use of drugs, mental problems, or even suicide.

Communicating with Culturally Different Parents

Parents of Asian/Pacific American students need to be reassured that it is not shameful for them to have children with academic and behavioral problems. They need to understand the importance of early identification and intervention. Teachers should be proactive in communicating with parents to report their children's social and academic achievement in school. Teachers should also encourage parents to contact them immediately if anything happens at home that might cause problems at school. Parents must be reassured that their family integrity will not be affected by working closely with school personnel for the benefit of their children.

The limited English proficiency of many Asian/Pacific American parents and their unfamiliarity with services for children with disabilities often leaves them feeling overwhelmed when deciding how best to provide for their child. Although Asian/Pacific American parents respect teachers, not all parents will trust and accept recommendations for placing their children in special education. Teachers need to be prepared for resistance and should continue to meet with parents when resistance occurs. Teachers should respect and allow parents of children with disabilities to cope with their reactions in their own ways. When the parent is ready to accept the recommendation, school personnel should provide information about the disability and services available to them. Parent information

workshops can be developed to assist Asian/Pacific American parents in understanding disabilities and in learning about services available to assist their children. These sessions should give parents tips on how to help their children perform better in school. Sessions should be conducted in the parents' first language. Trainers should try to avoid using jargon and translate information related to educational, medical, and social services into the parents' first language.

Assessment

Appropriate (and valid) assessment instruments and procedures must be used to help identify Asian/Pacific American learners who may have academic and behavioral problems. Formative evaluations conducted by classroom teachers can serve as a useful means of screening students for E/BD. The assessment practices for Asian/Pacific American learners should be culturally appropriate and ethical. They should also involve assessing instructional environments through classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers. Classroom observations should focus on teacher presentations, classroom management, teacher expectations, teacher feedback on student performance, monitoring of student progress, curricular materials and adaptations used, student engagement and opportunity to respond, teaching strategies used, and learning strategies taught. Assessing the instructional environment can help identify environmental variables that might have an impact on students' problem behaviors. In addition, school personnel should implement systematic screening procedures (e.g., *AIM for the BESt* [Ortiz & Wilkinson, 1991], *Multiple Gating Process* [Sprague & Walker, 2000]) and follow the criteria delineated by Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) when selecting and devising screening procedures.

1. The screening procedures should be proactive rather than reactive. Teachers of Asian/Pacific American learners, in particular, should take the initiative to identify students who are at high risk for displaying externalizing and/or internalizing behaviors.
2. During the identification process, teachers should use several methods (e.g., rankings, checklists, direct observations), conduct

screening in more than one setting (e.g., classroom, playground, home), and involve a variety of people (e.g., parents, teachers, peers). By collecting information from these sources, a teacher would become more objective to identify whether an Asian/Pacific American student demonstrates maladaptive behaviors.

3. Early identification is extremely critical in the assessment process. Screening should take place as soon as the student with suspected disordered behavior is placed in the school system.

In addition to direct observations, interviews, and ratings or rankings by the child's teacher, other supplemental information, such as examination of school records and peer or parent ratings, would help to minimize the chances of misidentification.

Conclusion

There remains a tremendous need to critically examine issues surrounding the underrepresentation of Asian/Pacific American students in special education. First, we need to look at our schools to determine whether valid and appropriate instruments and systematic screening and identification procedures are in place to accurately identify Asian/Pacific American students whose abilities may be hindered by their disabilities. Second, we need to determine whether Asian/Pacific American students receive appropriate placements and related services once they are diagnosed as having a disability. Third, research should focus on whether students' ethnic backgrounds, particularly the cultures of Asian/Pacific Americans, may influence school personnel's decisions on referral process. Finally, systematic investigations on effective service delivery models to serve Asian/Pacific American students should be conducted. Without empirical data, we will not be able to eliminate the fear that many Asian/Pacific American students are not properly diagnosed and do not receive the appropriate placements and services they need to cope with their disabilities.

3 Issues of Disproportionality for African American Learners

Gwendolyn Cartledge
The Ohio State University

A review of national and local data reveals that the issue of cultural diversity and behavioral disorders is most pronounced for African American students. Data provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE, 2000) show that African American students, who make up 14.8% of the student population, account for 20.2% of students identified with disabilities. For the category of emotional disturbance or behavioral disorders (E/BD), African American students make up 26.4%, nearly twice their representation in the general student population. Similar figures are found within general education among the so-called at-risk student population. Minority youths are most vulnerable, for example, in regard to school policies that emphasize expulsions and suspensions (Blyth & Milner, 1993; Larson, 1998), referrals for disciplinary actions (Gregory, 1995; Irvine, 1990), and more restricted educational placements (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). In addition to differential disciplinary practices for minority and majority students, Townsend,

Thomas, Witty, and Lee (1996) found that, compared to their majority counterparts, minority students were more likely to be denied legal protection and more often report that school personnel did not care about them.

Recently, Pauken and Daniel (2000) found that African American students are expelled at rates two to three times higher than European American students and receive more severe punishment than their European America counterparts for the same infractions. They cite other research that dispels a simplistic explanation of a disproportionate level of misbehavior by minority students and point to a biased system in which a double standard appears to exist. Figures released from the Applied Research Center and reported by *The Washington Post* (Claiborne, 1999) indicate that African American students are suspended or expelled up to five times more than European Americans. Although impoverished and minority children as a group have long been educationally marginalized, the subgroup most vulnerable for this "distinction" is males from minority groups. In general, male students tend to be disproportionately identified for special education, particularly for the categories of behavioral disorders and mental retardation (U.S. Department of Education, 1999), and placed in programs for students with emotional disturbances at a rate that is three and one half times that for females (Kehrberg, 1994).

Socially conscious authorities increasingly assert that U.S. schools are failing their students and disproportionately failing poor students of color (Bettmann & Moore, 1994; Gomez, 1994; Kozol, 1991). A prime example of that failure is in the schools' disciplinary measures. The overemphasis on punishment and coercive practices is largely ineffective, leading to negative modeling as well as causing students to devalue school, the schooling process, and school personnel. The greater push toward suspensions and expulsions is counterproductive and contraindicated, benefiting neither the schools nor the students they purport to serve. This is not simply an educational issue; it invariably leads to marginalization (i.e., poverty, poor living conditions, mental health disorders, criminality)

(Blyth & Milner, 1993). Furthermore, there are indications that suspensions may actually exacerbate rather than reduce behavior problems, often resulting in grade retention, dropping out of school, academic failure, and recidivism (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Morgan-D'Atrio, Northup, LaFleur, & Spera, 1996).

Lo and Cartledge (2001) examined the office disciplinary referral data for two urban elementary schools, one with a predominately European American population and one with a predominately African American population. They found that, in comparison to the predominately European American school, out-of-school suspension was the most common disciplinary action (57%) for the school with mostly African American students. A closer look at the referral information also revealed that for the students encountering the most (five or more) office referrals, the number of out-of-school suspensions increased systematically and dramatically, so that by spring at least three of the students were on home instruction. At the least, these reports fail to support the notion that for the students in this school punitive actions contributed to school success or served as a deterrent for at least 30% of the school population.

In its *Twenty-Second Annual Report to Congress,* the Office of Special Education Programs (USDE, 2000) noted the increased difficulties associated with educating children with behavior problems and observed that these greater challenges corresponded with the growing diversity of the student population. The authors pointed out increased heterogeneity in terms of students with language differences, who experience family instability; poverty; and limited mental health, social, or medical supports. Schools are expected to meet the diverse learning and behavioral needs of all students within safe and wholesome environments. According to the authors of this report, these conditions are most likely to be fostered with the use of culturally appropriate interventions "that consider the unique and individualized learning histories (social, community, historical, familial, racial, gender, etc.) of all individuals (children with problem behaviors, families, teachers, community agents, etc.) . . ." (USDE, 2000, p. II-10).

Culturally Responsive Strategies

Positive Interventions

The first step toward cross-cultural awareness is an understanding of the impact of current school practices on students from impoverished minority backgrounds. The data clearly show that these students not only encounter the most punitive actions both at home and at school, but also experience the poorest outcomes of all the students in our schools (Carmen, 1990). There are several contributing factors, but one of the most salient is the lack of skill on the part of both school personnel and parents. Limitations include failing to help students understand acceptable and unacceptable behavior, having unrealistic expectations, employing punitive disciplinary strategies, unclear rules, unclear expectations and consequences, and failing to accommodate individual differences (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Smith & Rivera, 1995). For students from impoverished minority backgrounds, these conditions are exacerbated by the fact that they are likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers who have not yet mastered critical skills relative to academic instruction or social behavior. Furthermore, when cultural discontinuities result from differences in cultural background between the child and school personnel, the potential for behavioral misperceptions and cultural clashes increases (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996).

A major factor in improving the schooling and overall success of African American students with E/BD is the ability to empower school personnel to be *proactive* rather than reactive. Along these lines, school personnel need to make a concerted effort to recognize and reinforce socially appropriate behavior. For behavioral inadequacies, teachers need to clearly define the desired behavior and teach the specific expectations. For example, instead of merely telling students to enter the lunchroom appropriately, teachers might demonstrate with repeated practice the specific actions that constitute the desired lunchroom-entering behavior. This provides for direct social skill instruction.

Social Skills Instruction

Social skills instruction is an effective means for helping students learn how to perform desired behaviors. The model for teaching social behaviors is essentially to tell the student what the behavior is, show the student how to perform the behavior, give the student ample opportunities to practice the behavior with corrective/reinforcing feedback, and provide for behavior maintenance and transfer (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995). Several commercial curricula exist (e.g., Cartledge & Kleefeld, 1991; 1994; Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) that provide scripts for teaching numerous school-related social behaviors, but teachers would be well advised to become skilled in this generic model in order to teach behaviors not addressed in published curricula. Once behaviors are taught, teachers are encouraged to help reinforce them by "catching the students being good," that is, providing some positive consequence when students are observed to conform throughout the school day. Procedures also need to be in place to discourage misbehavior. Infractions need to be specified, with corresponding consequences that are carried out fairly and consistently. Finally, accurate and ongoing record keeping is required to determine whether the behavior prevention/management system is effective.

Since social behavior is a reflection of cultural background, a child's culture should play a significant role in his or her social skills instruction. Inherent in the concept of culturally relevant social skill instruction is a reciprocal process in which the educator (a) learns to respect each learner's cultural background; (b) encourages the learner to appreciate the richness of this culture; (c) when needed, helps the learner to acquire additional or alternative behaviors as demanded by the social situation; and (d) similarly employs and practices the taught behaviors.

Lo and Cartledge (2001), in their study of two urban elementary schools mentioned earlier, observed that the most common infraction in the predominantly African American school involved some form of aggression, such as fighting or assaulting peers. Social skills

instruction that centered on alternatives to aggression would be culturally responsive and sensitive for this group. Students from impoverished backgrounds, particularly African American students in urban environments, are reared under conditions in which aggressive behavior is socialized. In school, however, we can teach these students to learn to make an assertive comment, to walk away, to change the subject, to use humor, or to report some provocation to an authority figure when the other alternatives did not work. These students would be empowered rather than persist with their social inadequacies and school failure. Current practices are to suspend or expel students, creating conditions wherein students learn no new behaviors and that may inadvertently reinforce the maladaptive ones. My anecdotal observation is that after repeated office referrals and suspensions, these students are then referred and placed in programs for students with E/BD, where the pattern is likely to persist and the students will have additional opportunities from their classmates with E/BD to model antisocial behavior.

Social skills instruction will be most effective if employed on a schoolwide basis so that all the students and personnel know when the appropriate behavior occurs and how to reinforce it. If the entire school is committed to systematically and continuously teaching alternatives to aggression and if students are rewarded by school personnel and peers for exhibiting these behaviors, aggressive behavior problems unquestionably would decline. An added bonus would be to get parents to support these behavioral alternatives at home.

When educators are targeting social skills from a cultural perspective, it is important to recognize a group's strengths as well as deficits. In a recent study of the social behavior of culturally different groups, Feng and Cartledge (1996) found African American students to be more people oriented and significantly more generous in their indications of liking their peers, regardless of race; Asian American students engaged in more cross-race interactions than either of the other two groups; and European Americans had the highest rate of positive statements made to their peers. If differences among individuals or groups are viewed only in terms of

deficits, distortions can occur. If educators assume that every African American male will respond with verbal aggression and that such acts are signs of serious disorders or pathology, they likely will overlook the youngster's humanity and respond to him in counterproductive ways.

An Individual Management System

For students who present persistent problem behaviors, there is a need to develop and implement an individual management system. Lewis and Sugai (1999) referred to this as providing individualized behavior support wherein a school team conducts a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior (and its context) and then devises and employs a support plan that is monitored closely by key personnel. Within this approach, it is possible to analyze and account for cultural factors that may be contributing to the student's poor school adjustment. Interventions can focus on the way in which the student is schooled as well as help the student to learn and abide by the behaviors that lead to school success.

Cultural Understandings

Although no group is a monolith, the educational interests of African American students will be better served if school personnel have a greater understanding of the culture and background of these students. Since males greatly outnumber females in programs for students with E/BD, our discussion focuses on the African American male culture. School personnel need detailed information about their students. Understanding a youngster's culture in terms of role models, family environment, specific characteristics (e.g., clothes, hair), personality (e.g., leadership skills, self-esteem), and personal goals is basic to teaching and motivating the learner to succeed (Wynn, 1992). Wynn contends that teachers often know little about the background, interests, or aspirations of specific students; he argues that at least two critical understandings must be acquired and employed. First, the culturally specific behavior of youths from minority backgrounds should be viewed as differences, not as deficits. Their backgrounds are not inherently inferior, and the goal is not that they should discard their ways of being in order

to emulate the styles of European Americans. Second, African American males are humanistic and strongly desire to be valued and respected. When affection and respect are not evident, anger and rebelliousness are likely to result. Elsewhere, I give examples in which European American teachers misperceived culturally based social behaviors and, according to the students, punished them unfairly (Cartledge & Loe, in press; Cartledge & Milburn, 1996). This often leads to what Irvine (1990) called vicious conflict cycles wherein students are intent on escalating their disruptive behavior to get back at the teacher and the teacher continually heightens the severity of the punishing consequences.

Peer-Mediated Strategies

African American males typically come from a collectivistic, rather than individualistic, background in which the family and peer group are most important (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996; Wynn, 1992). Ladson-Billings (1994) suggested that these students would learn best within positive environments where there is a community of learners, focused on helping others as well as themselves. For these reasons peer mentoring strategies, such as pairing older students with younger peers, have special relevance for African American students. Indeed, the positive effects of peer-mediated approaches with this population are well documented (Blake, Wong, Cartledge, & Gordon, 2000; Cochran, Feng, Cartledge, & Hamilton, 1993).

Cochran and colleagues (1993) used African American fifth-grade boys with behavioral disorders (BD) to teach sight words to African American second-grade boys with BD. Both groups of students had been identified as having the lowest levels of academic and social skills compared to their same-age peers. Posttest findings, however, showed that the students participating in the tutoring (fifth and second grade) had higher sight-word recognition levels than their nontutoring age mates. An additional outcome was that over the course of the study positive interactions between the tutoring pairs systematically increased. Blake and colleagues (2000) found that students with BD with the highest-level verbal aggression rates not only proved to be competent social skills trainers for BD peers, but

also evidenced the greatest reductions in verbal aggression and gains in positive communication skills.

These findings point to the potential beneficial effects of positive strategies whereby students are given responsibilities to mentor, teach, or encourage fellow students in appropriate school behaviors. A student constantly referred for playground bullying behavior, for example, could be trained and supervised to be a playground monitor. Such duties might involve administering "coupons" to students observed playing nicely on the playground. Accompanied by a school professional, the student would simply tell the classmate what he or she was doing correctly, give the coupon, and move on to the next student. These are some of the ways teachers can promote desired social behaviors and simultaneously help students to want to engage in those behaviors.

A desired outcome of successful schooling is that young people exhibit disciplined and ordered lives. Teachers should strive not to make students behave, but to motivate students to *want* to behave. There is ample evidence that strategies that humiliate and demean students typically do not motivate compliance or foster good will. This is particularly true for students from diverse groups. These students need valuing, affirming experiences that empower them to recognize their abilities to make good decisions for themselves and meaningful and socially appropriate contributions to the well-being of others.

Wynn (1992) asserted that young African American males often display extraordinary discipline for desired goals in sports, music, or other areas of personal interest. We know that school-based discipline is at least partly predicated on mutual respect between teachers and students. So, rather than superimposing rules and engaging in power struggles, teachers and students should jointly establish a code of acceptable behavior. When students understand the importance of these regulations and they take some ownership in developing them, they are more likely to follow and enforce them with their peers. A sample code of conduct is given that includes behaviors such as affirming each other, showing respect for self and others, and avoiding verbal and physical aggression.

Effective Instruction

Probably the most important aspect of cultural competence for teaching African American students with E/BD is effective instruction. Structured learning environments are important for all students, but especially for students who come to school unprepared for the ambiguous rules and communication styles typical of middle-class schools (Delpit, 1988; 1995). Teachers who fail to structure their classroom and academic day run the risk of losing valuable instructional time and invariably encounter increases in disruptive pupil behavior.

Because these students often enter school in a "deficit" position relative to prerequisite academic learning, they need explicit instruction in critical understandings and skills before they can benefit from and utilize less direct methodologies (Delpit, 1988; 1995). Well-designed direct instructional models employ a clear academic focus, clear learning goals, ongoing monitoring of student performance, and high rates of student responding (Heward, 2000). Together, these procedures produce greater academic achievement among students and are shown to be one of the most effective means for teaching urban disadvantaged students (Carnine & Kinder, 1985; Englemann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988). A more extensive discussion is given on this critical topic later in this monograph.

Conclusion

African American students—particularly male students—with or at risk for E/BD evidence the greatest need for positive and productive school experiences. Educational programs need to be structured so that students are engaged in the schooling process on an ongoing basis and there is clear evidence of continuous academic and social growth. With appropriate training and commitment, schools can be instrumental in employing strategies such as those outlined in this chapter to bring about higher desired returns for these students.

4

Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners with Behavioral Disorders

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It has long been a concern that youths from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, particularly African American children and youths, are overrepresented in special education classes. The proportion of African American students identified as "behaviorally disturbed (BD), the proportion expelled or removed from their local school settings, and the proportion ultimately arrested and adjudicated into the juvenile correctional systems is far greater than comparable percentages for white youth" (Osher, Woodruff, & Sims, 2001, p. 1). Numerous factors contribute to this problem.

Osher and his colleagues (2001) have identified various factors that—either directly or indirectly—influence racial disproportionality in special education classrooms. First, teachers' judgment is a highly significant variable in the identification of children for possible special education placement. Second, there is assessment bias emerging from the bias inherent in assessment instruments and practices. A third factor pertains to cultural discontinuity, with the culture of the school being in conflict with the child's background. A fourth factor is systemic in nature; that is, by focusing exclusively on the deficits in the child, we fail to more closely examine the context of instruction. In the succeeding discussion, we examine the assessment aspect of that process more fully.

Cultural Bias in Standardized Assessment Measures

Assessment of students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) is a multifaceted process that can occur in a number of contexts and have a number of purposes. In the educational setting, assessment is initiated for one of three purposes: (a) to determine whether a student qualifies for special education services; (b) to determine the most appropriate level of special education services for students who are diagnosed with disabilities; and (c) to help educators develop and implement specific interventions designed to address problem behaviors in the classroom and the broader school environment. A variety of assessment techniques are routinely employed for these purposes, each of which raises special issues related to cultural diversity that must be understood by education professionals.

When the assessment of students for special education eligibility is discussed, cultural issues have centered on the debate over cultural bias in standardized tests of academic achievement and intelligence. This debate is most relevant to students with E/BD who reside in states that require assessment of intellectual ability and academic functioning as part of the multifactored evaluation. The

cultural bias debate has centered on concerns that students from CLD backgrounds—particularly African American, Hispanic American, and Native American students—demonstrate lower performance relative to European American middle-class students (Reschly & Grimes, 1995) on standardized, norm-referenced tests of ability and achievement. To say the least, this is an ongoing area of controversy. Defenders of standardized testing (Jensen, 1980; Reschly, 1979; Reschly & Grimes, 1995; Reynolds & Kaiser, 1990) contend that most conventional tests are not biased according to the conventional definitions related to the statistical properties of items, psychometric characteristics of tests, factor analysis, examiner/examinee interaction effects, and predictive validity. In spite of these claims, some advocates of standardized tests note that cultural variables influence test results. As Sattler (1992) pointed out, "Children come to us from many different cultural backgrounds, and these differing backgrounds must be considered in selection of tests and interpretation of norms" (p. 6).

On the other side of this debate are critics of standardized testing. Some of these critics contend that test bias exists in domains other than the psychometrically oriented areas. These arguments allege that the content of test items and test procedures, because they emanate from the mainstream (i.e., European American, middle class) culture, is inherently biased against CLD groups. In other words, students from CLD backgrounds may demonstrate lower mean scores on many IQ tests due to unfamiliarity with the content of some questions or the expectations imposed by the testing procedures (Suzuki & Kugler, 1995).

Some arguments in the test bias debate focus primarily on the psychometric characteristics of specific instruments, whereas others involve the interaction between psychologist and student. At its essence, assessment is an interaction between people, not a collection of test scores. In many situations, this interaction extends to the student's family. As such, cross-cultural competence extends beyond the technical aspects of assessment, such as the selection of instruments that have acceptable reliability and validity for the student's ethnic group, awareness of how dialect impacts performance,

and an ability to use interpreters appropriately when necessary (Figueroa, Sandoval, & Merino, 1984; Gopaul-McNicol, 1997). It also includes awareness of how cultural differences impact the interpersonal aspects of rapport building and communication.

When a student is from a different cultural background, it is imperative that we understand the cultural influences on that student's performance (Armor-Thomas, 1992). Variables such as limited English language proficiency, the student's relative comfort with an examiner from a different ethnic group, and the examiner's familiarity with the student's English dialect may have to be taken into consideration as limitations to performance (Figueroa et al., 1984). A thorough understanding of how family structure impacts behavior, social-emotional functioning, and academic functioning is vital when interpreting assessment information. As such, professionals must be competent in communicating with culturally different families in a way that helps build rapport and encourages collaboration.

Multicultural Issues in Problem-Solving Assessment

Education professionals may engage in problem-solving assessment in a variety of settings, including schools, child guidance clinics, rehabilitation agencies, and mental health centers. The professional, family, or school staff may initiate assessment services to develop a practical solution to a student's behavioral problems. Problem-solving assessment in the school setting is a highly individualized process that often involves collaboration between individuals with varying backgrounds and expertise. Teachers, school administrators, and parents who have concerns about a student's behavior or emotional functioning will often collaborate with a school psychologist to address their concerns. In this context, the psychologist works as a consultant who facilitates an assessment process aimed at developing an intervention plan that educators or family members can use to help resolve the student's presenting problem. Accurate and effective communication is a necessary component of this assessment process.

Miscommunication among members of the assessment team can manifest itself as an inaccurate interpretation of a student's presenting problem and as resistance from team members toward intervention recommendations from other professionals. The net result can be students who do not demonstrate desired improvements and increased frustration from parents and educators. Professionals who conduct problem-solving assessments need to become aware of cross-cultural issues that can interfere with effective communication.

The Assessment Process

In an effort to reduce the overrepresentation of youths from CLD backgrounds in special education classes, clinicians need to develop an assessment process that evaluates the child from an ecological perspective. Because of the heavy testing load of school psychologists in urban areas, thorough evaluations are sometimes sacrificed for expediency. Ochoa, Amado, and Ryan-Arrendondo (2000) surveyed school psychologists regarding the behavioral and emotional assessment of African American children. One section of the survey asked participants to specify their training needs with respect to the evaluation of African American students for emotional disturbance. The most frequently cited training needs were as follows:

- Formal assessment tests and techniques.
- Cultural issues and differences.
- Cultural expectations and/or influences on behavior.
- Interpretation of test results.
- Psychometric properties of tests specifically pertaining to African American students.
- Effective intervention strategies.
- Acculturation.
- Acculturation measures.

These findings clearly suggest a sense of inadequacy and the need for training in this area.

Assessments with children from CLD backgrounds should be culturally relevant. Gibbs (1998) suggested that sociocultural factors must be considered when conducting assessments with African American youths, particularly those from socially segregated and economically disadvantaged families. Suggestions for the assessment of African American children that are from a best practice perspective pertain to interviews, observations, and standardized tests.

Interviews

Too often, education personnel view deficits as residing within the child. Interviewing teachers as well as the child and parents and/or guardians will provide more information about the child's behavior in a variety of contexts. Interviews also permit the examiner to obtain more in-depth information about the presenting behavior problem. It is important to evaluate the child's behavior from an ecological perspective, which encourages clinicians to view the child within the child's cultural milieu. Finally, interviews allow the clinician to obtain extensive information about the child's family environment—information not otherwise available that can be essential to understanding the child's behavior.

Observations

When observing for possible placement for E/BD, it is important to conduct multiple observations, in multiple settings, and by more than one observer. Multiple observations provide information about how the child functions in a variety of settings. Observations should occur not only in the school environment, but in the community and home environment as well. Too often, we focus on a child's misbehavior and fail to seek out environments in which his or her behavior may be appropriate. Multiple observations conducted in multiple settings will allow the latter to occur.

Standardized Tests

Standardized testing is the area most often researched with respect to bias in assessment. School psychologists should always review

information provided in the test manual on the norming process to ensure that the instrument has been normed using procedures that adequately represent the student's ethnic and socioeconomic background. When assessing students from different cultural backgrounds, care should be taken to avoid instruments that contain a high degree of culturally specific content. This should be done to avoid the misattribution of poor performance to ability when unfamiliarity with mainstream culture may be a more appropriate interpretation. When linguistic differences exist, instruments should be selected that have content instructions that can be accurately translated into the student's native language. When interpreting results, attention should be given to any deviation from standard procedures that may have had a negative impact on student performance.

Developing Cross-Cultural Competence

A wealth of literature is available on specific professional competencies and considerations that apply to the assessment of culturally diverse students with E/BD. These competencies have been described in a number of contexts, including early intervention (Lynch & Hanson, 1992), counseling psychology (Arredondo et al., 1996; Tyler, Brome, & Williams, 1991), family therapy (Fontes & Thomas, 1996), consultation (Barnett et al., 1995; Brown, 1997), assessment (Suzuki & Kugler, 1995), and training (Gopaul-McNicol, 1997). Although various terms are used in the literature, the term *cross-cultural competence* frequently is used to describe the general skills and knowledge that professionals should possess for providing any type of service with CLD populations. Although this discussion is multidisciplinary in nature, a common set of skills quickly emerges that defines cross-cultural competencies and the manner in which they are obtained. These have been outlined by professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA; 1993), the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD; Arredondo et al., 1996), and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP; Flanagan & Miranda, 1995; Mosley-Howard, 1992). We now turn to a discussion of these general skills.

Exercising cross-cultural awareness can be a complex exercise. Professionals must learn to understand how their culture impacts their thoughts and behavior and attempt to learn the same about others (Arredondo et al., 1996). The APA, in its *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations* (1993) provides a set of guidelines indicating that cross-cultural competence involves knowledge about other cultures as well as how an individual's cultural background impacts his or her psychological functioning. Although necessary, this knowledge is not sufficient for effective cross-cultural practices. Awareness of the manner in which psychologists' culture impacts their behavior and attitudes is an important component of cross-cultural competence that is excluded from the APA guidelines.

Other organizations and authors, particularly within the field of counseling psychology, have emphasized the need for psychologists to begin the development of cross-cultural competencies with a study of their own cultural backgrounds. Arredondo and colleagues (1996) outlined the multicultural counseling competencies advocated by the AMCD. Some of these guidelines, such as "Culturally skilled counselors are aware of how their own cultural background and experiences have influenced attitudes, values, and biases about psychological processes" (Arredondo et al., 1996, p. 57), illustrate the importance of cultural introspection. Within the school psychology literature, Gopaul-McNicol (1997) emphasized the need for school psychologists to become aware of their own cultural biases and beliefs in addition to learning about interracial issues affecting various cultural groups and cultural differences with respect to motivational and learning styles, expectations related to achievement, family roles, and exceptionality.

Developing Self-Awareness

Lynch and Hanson (1992) delineated some of the general skills necessary to develop cross-cultural competence. Their first stage (i.e., developing self-awareness) assumes that European Americans who are part of the mainstream cultural group may have the least awareness of the ways in which their culture influences their behavior and interactions. Self-awareness consists of becoming aware of

two aspects of one's culture: heritage and the values, behaviors, and beliefs that are identified with one's cultural heritage (Lynch & Hanson, 1992). Exploring one's heritage involves becoming familiar with historical issues such as place of origin, time and circumstances of migration, languages spoken, and place of family's first settlement, which tell a family's story of coming into a particular country. In addition, the political, vocational, and religious practices can be examined at various points in time, providing a picture of how these aspects of culture have changed over the course of several generations (Lynch & Hanson, 1992).

Related to history are the values, behaviors, beliefs, and customs that are identified with one's cultural heritage. The following are some examples of these characteristics (Althem, 1988; Lynch & Hanson, 1992):

- Emphasis on the importance of individualism and privacy.
- Belief in the equality of individuals.
- Informality in interactions with others.
- Emphasis on future, change, and progress.
- Belief in the general goodness of humanity.
- Emphasis on the importance of time and punctuality.
- Emphasis on the importance of achievement, action, work, and materialism.
- Pride in interactional styles that are direct and positive.

Learning About Other Cultures

After developing an understanding of one's own culture and its effects on one's thinking and behavior, the next step is to learn about other cultures through readings, interactions, and involvement. This information helps to explain the cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors that are encountered when working with members of other cultural groups. Four ways of learning about other cultures are recommended: (a) learning through studying and reading about the culture, (b) talking or working with individuals from a culture

who can act as cultural guides or mediators, (c) participating in the daily life of another culture, and (d) learning the language of another culture (when applicable). While specific content regarding other cultural groups is important, it often is not sufficient to produce cross-cultural competence (Imber-Black, 1997). Additional information is necessary regarding a culture's view of children and child-rearing practices; family structure and roles; and views of disability, health and healing practices, and intervention (Hanson, Lynch, & Wayman, 1990; Lynch & Hanson, 1992). The importance of understanding others' cultural contexts cannot be overstated. Poor awareness of other cultures can easily lead to the misattribution of traits. A person speaking English with a Hispanic accent, for example, may be assumed to be less intelligent or more difficult to deal with or may be viewed in other negative ways, whereas a person speaking with an Australian accent may be viewed in a more favorable light (Arredondo et al., 1996).

Developing Cultural Sensitivity

The steps in developing cross-cultural competence described thus far are largely cognitive skills. In other words, knowledge of one's own and different cultures can help create insight into how cultural differences affect therapeutic interactions. This knowledge, however, may not be sufficient to work effectively with culturally different populations. Fontes and Thomas (1996) distinguished between cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. Sensitivity is primarily an affective skill. Being culturally sensitive means respecting one's self and others as cultural beings, appreciating one's cultural uniqueness as well as cultural diversity, and keeping one's heart open to similarities and differences among people from different cultural groups. Cultural sensitivity is expressed through our unprovoked emotional reactions to people. Reactions such as fear, mistrust, revulsion, adoration, or pity, when they are based solely on the ethnic or racial characteristics of an individual, are signs of reduced cultural sensitivity. This can greatly reduce a psychologist's effectiveness and awareness. Because we are often unaware of our automatic reactions, the development of cultural awareness is best facilitated through supervision and training (Fontes & Thomas, 1996).

Developing Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

Lynch and Hanson's third stage (i.e., developing effective cross-cultural communication) involves the application of both cognitive and affective skills acquired through introspection, study, and interaction with other cultures. Specifically, communication effectiveness is significantly improved when the professional (a) respects individuals from other cultures, (b) makes continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from others' points of view, (c) is open to new learning, (d) is flexible, (e) has a sense of humor, (f) tolerates ambiguity well, and (g) approaches others with a desire to learn (Hanson et al., 1990). These characteristics represent general traits of effective communicators rather than specific competencies. More specific areas of competence involve both verbal and nonverbal modes of communication and relate directly to information obtained from the study of and interaction with other cultural groups. Cross-culturally competent school psychologists should be aware of more specific aspects of nonverbal communication. Cultural differences in the meanings attributed to direct and indirect eye contact, facial expressions, proximity and touching, body language, and gestures are all potential grounds for miscommunication. Professionals should become familiar with how other cultural groups utilize each of these modes of communication (Hanson et al., 1990).

Conclusion

Assessment is one of the major activities that school psychologists engage in when identifying children for special education services. However, assessment activities have often been too narrowly defined in the past and have not incorporated variables that allow clinicians to take into account issues of diversity. Using a problem-solving assessment model that focuses on ethnic validity enables education personnel to evaluate the child through an ecological lens rather than viewing deficits as residing within the child.

Without a doubt, the issues surrounding the overrepresentation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse groups in special education are complex and far reaching. In the area of assessment,

best practices dictate that an effective assessment utilize a culturally appropriate approach that always seeks to evaluate the child within the context of his or her environment. This has a greater chance of occurring when clinicians are also cross-culturally competent.

5

Instruction of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners with Behavioral Disorders

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Every child (and especially a child who is most at risk for emotional or behavioral disorders [E/BD]), needs an effective educational program taught by an individual who can maximize the learning time in the classroom so that all students can succeed and make robust academic improvements. In this chapter, I explore some of the issues that relate to educating students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds with E/BD. Recognizing the rapid growth of middle-income CLD families, my primary emphasis is on the significant number of CLD students from urban and low-income environments who have E/BD. Discussion on instruction for this population relates to ineffective current practices, promising research, and finally, implications for effective schooling for these students.

The skills needed to be a successful preservice university student are not necessarily the same skills that make for an effective teacher (Conderman & Stephens, 2000; Michie, 1999). An estimated 6% of inservice teachers leave the teaching profession each year. For teachers in urban districts, the percentage is much higher, 9.3% (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000), and the attrition rates are even higher for first-year teachers in other high need areas such as special education (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992). In one survey, as many as 40% of first year special education teachers in urban districts left the field either before or upon completing their first year of teaching (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992). Although public schools are charged with providing education for all children, there are significant differences in teacher satisfaction for teachers in urban districts serving students with special needs. Why are schools in the inner city so vastly different from schools in the suburbs? Why are urban school environments so difficult for teachers in general and new teachers specifically? What do teacher preparation and inservice programs need to do to prepare students for a career in urban education?

Needs of Urban Children

Culturally and linguistically diverse children from low-income families are the fastest growing population of school-aged children in the United States. While many authorities affirm that these children have the greatest educational needs, they are least likely to receive high-quality instruction. The existence of inadequate services for children in poor, urban settings is clear if we look critically at student performance in basic skills and the high rate of school failure experienced by these children (Hart & Risley, 1995; 1999). For a large percentage of students, these failing experiences start in the early elementary grades (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Bulgren, 1993). For low-income children—especially urban children of color—there is an expanding gap between what skills are taught and what skills are needed to be successful in today's society (Greenwood et al., 1993). Not only do urban, low-income children start out behind, coming to school with fewer skills than their middle-class peers, but also the quality and quantity of instruction provided to them often

are inferior to instruction at suburban schools (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Hall, 1989; Hart & Risley, 1995; 1999). Authorities offer various explanations for this inequality in public education.

Ineffective Instruction for Urban Learners

Hirsch (1999), in his book *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them,* identified what he believed to be the critical point of why education in North America fails so many students, especially students in poverty. According to Hirsch, education for the past 50 years has generally followed a relatively progressive philosophy or model of education. From that perspective, anything implemented or done in a classroom that is "unnatural," such as highly structured activities, is inherently wrong. Activities that require too much time to practice a specific skill or activities that require only one correct answer or response can stifle students' creativity. Furthermore, rewards for student achievement are discouraged, presumably because they can curb a child's natural curiosity. Schools or classrooms that emphasize clarity of presentation, structure, corrective feedback, and repetition are viewed by some as inferior to classrooms that use a hands-on approach to learning. Curriculum that integrates different skills rather than teaching skills in isolation, curriculum that is interesting, individualized, and develops the "entire child," is seen as ideal.

According to Hirsch (1999), the application of the progressive or naturalistic model is almost single-handedly responsible for the exceptionally poor test scores of North American students. This type of instruction is especially damaging for students at risk for academic failure, since many students from the inner city do not receive the amount of supplementary academic instruction they need from outside the classroom to keep up with their school-aged suburban peers.

Delpit (1995) would agree with Hirsch on this point. In her book *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflicts in the Classroom,* Delpit

explained that the indirect instructional methods that are the hallmark of progressive education are too foreign for many African American students who have been raised with different cultural influences in the home. Many African American children are not acquainted with the veiled requests made by teachers who have not clearly established themselves as authority figures in their classrooms (another characteristic of progressive educators) (Delpit, 1995). According to Delpit, notwithstanding its widespread application, there is scant research to show that the major tenets of the process approach are efficacious for children of color. Delpit has argued that when teachers refer to the value of the process of learning (a phrase commonly used by progressive educators), such statements are mistruths at best and blatant lies to children at worst. Delpit (1995) suggested that African American children learn best when the teacher makes herself the clear authority in the classroom. That means that the teacher must make requests to students that are clear and not framed as questions. Teacher direction for instruction must also be presented in a way that is clear. Children should know what it is they are learning and what, specifically, they need to take from the lesson. Indirect requests and student-directed learning are cultural strategies that were created by European Americans, but they are not necessarily effective for children of color (Delpit, 1995).

In a review of the relevant literature, Arreaga-Mayer and Greenwood (1986) observed that, when given structured learning conditions, children from CLD backgrounds learned in the same manner as children in the majority culture with respect to response fluency, slope of learning curves, learning trials, use of discriminative stimuli, and reinforcement procedures. These authors noted, however, that compared to their suburban counterparts, inner-city students from CLD backgrounds were given significantly fewer opportunities to respond; in order to receive comparable opportunities, they would have to remain in school for the entire summer.

The argument is not that urban children need to spend more time in school; rather, school time must be used more effectively. Some years ago, Hall, Delquadri, Greenwood, and Thurston (1982) exam-

ined the amount of time students were engaged in academic instruction in six inner-city classrooms. Although teachers in these urban classrooms, on average, allocated 75% of the school day to time students would be engaged in academic instruction, only 1% of the entire day was actually spent in instruction. In one urban first-grade class, students spent only 20 seconds a day actually reading; students in another class averaged only 5 seconds per day practicing basic math facts.

Descriptive studies (e.g., Hart & Risley, 1995), along with empirical research from the Juniper Gardens Project (e.g., Hall et al., 1982), provide useful information on the preschool and school experiences of many urban children. We know from the ecobehavioral analysis research that students in urban settings receive inferior educational opportunities that they can ill afford. These studies have framed several problems that plague our urban schools and provide research direction to researchers seeking to identify possible solutions for urban classrooms.

Empirically Proven Strategies for Urban Students with Behavioral Disorders and Learning Disabilities

Effects of Academic Performance on Disruptive Behavior

There is little question of the critical relationship between academic performance and social adjustment. Many teachers note that the best students, the ones who are performing well academically, are also their best-behaved students. Cartledge and Milburn (1995) indicated that academic and social behaviors are linked; they do not occur in isolation in the classroom. Other authors have also emphasized the interaction between academic achievement and social behavior (Adams & Engelmann, 1996; Rhode, William, & Reavis, 1998; Sloane, 1988; Walker, 1997).

Armendariz and Umbreit (1999) examined the effects of response cards in a general education lecture format class, looking exclusively at the reduction of student disruptions. Project participants were

8- to 9-year-old students in an urban bilingual third-grade classroom. The response card intervention was conducted 3 days per week for 20 minutes a day during the mathematics lecture. The classroom teacher, a veteran of 15 years, had always taught her math lectures in a traditional lecture format. The teacher presented the material and the students most often passively engaged in listening to the teacher. Students would raise their hand if they had a question about information presented during the lecture. The authors chose to use write-on response cards for this demonstration to accommodate for the wide variation of possible questions and answers presented in the math lecture. The baseline condition consisted of the teacher presenting the lesson in the traditional lecture format. The response card intervention was used for six sessions following the baseline condition, and then a second baseline phase was implemented.

Armendariz and Umbreit (1999) reported a considerable decrease in the mean percentage of intervals in which students exhibited disruptive behavior during the intervention phase. Every student had fewer occurrences of disruptive behavior in the response card treatment phase than under baseline conditions. Reduction of disruptive behavior from baseline to intervention ranged from 100% (greatest decrease) to 59% (least decrease). Follow-up data, collected 4 weeks after the intervention, showed that students resumed a high rate of disruptive behavior once the teacher returned to the traditional approach, or baseline condition (Armendariz & Umbreit, 1999). These findings, along with previous research, provide a strong rationale for using direct instruction strategies in classrooms for students from CLD backgrounds who have or are at risk for E/BD. These procedures simultaneously address critical needs related to academic achievement and adaptive behavior.

Conclusion

Many current approaches to instruction fail to address the diverse learning needs of poor learners, particularly students with behavior problems. To be successful, students must be taught under condi-

tions in which they respond to academic materials at high rates and with accuracy. These high response rates not only will lead to improved academic performance, but also will help to reduce disruptive behavior. Instead of a focus on a curriculum of behavior control, teachers of CLD students with E/BD would be well advised to place emphasis on academic learning through effective instruction.

A strong instructional program is the first line of defense against disruptive behaviors. A technology exists through direct instruction to create more effective learning conditions for students with E/BD. It follows that universities and school districts must ensure that all teachers master and make use of these skills in the interest of their students.

6

Issues in Family–School Relationships

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Today, there is increased recognition that service providers need to examine critically their own perspectives on diversity and "determine if diversity appears as a 'cultural deficit' (implying the need for change), a 'cultural mismatch' (implying that learners from different cultural backgrounds fail because their traits are incompatible with the schools' teaching practices), or as 'culturally different' (implying that differences enrich the classroom and make individuals unique" (Manning & Baruth, 2000, p. 50). This self-examination is especially important because service providers' perception of diversity largely determines how they will respond to students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) and their families. This chapter focuses on family and school issues related to the development of cross-cultural services for diverse learners with E/BD and their families. Cross-cultural communication strategies are provided to help strengthen family–school relationships.

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Family Issues

IDEA 1997 and Families

The *National Agenda for Achieving Better Results for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance* (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) states that with 2 decades of experience in providing free and appropriate public education for all children, research has consistently shown that positive student outcomes correlate with practices that involve meaningful opportunities for parents and families to participate in their children's education. The authors of this document also identified two targets (i.e., Targets 3 and 4) relevant to culturally diverse families with children who have E/BD. As presented by Coutinho and Denny (1996), Target 3 addresses the need "to encourage culturally competent and linguistically appropriate exchanges and collaborations among families, professionals, students, and communities. These collaborations should foster equitable outcomes for all students and result in the identification and provision of services that are responsive to issues of race, culture, gender, and social and economic class" (p. 218). The aim of Target 4 is "to foster collaborations that fully include family members on the team of service providers that implements family focused services to improve educational outcomes. Services should be open, helpful, culturally competent, accessible to families, and be school as well as community-based" (p. 218). The mandate to involve families of culturally diverse students with E/BD requires service providers to examine their own viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviors toward these families. Service providers need to recognize the ways in which these perspectives may create barriers and hinder the delivery of family-centered services.

Cultural Factors

Schools have long recognized the importance of involving parents in their child's education. However, until recently, educators mainly worked with middle- and upper-class European Americans and interacted less with other races, cultures, and ethnic groups. This lowered involvement with families from racial and ethnically diverse backgrounds may be due to limited knowledge of the unique

backgrounds and special needs of these families. However, a family's origin, background, and culture have a major impact on the behavior of its members. No two families are the same, even those from the same cultural group (Lue & Green, 2000). All cultural groups contain innumerable subcultures exhibiting a variety of complex beliefs, attitudes, and values. Culture, socioeconomic class, family, and language all play significant roles and interact in complex ways to create unique learners with individual strengths and needs.

A common household arrangement in many diverse families is an extended family model, one that relies on a wide network of kin and community. Whereas European Americans focus more on the immediate nuclear family, families of most other cultures may include extended family members (i.e., aunts, uncles, grandparents). Diverse family structures that go beyond the nuclear family may consist of blended, foster, single-parent, and multigenerational families; combined sibling households; co-parents; and/or nonbiological kin rearing children and youths. Varied family systems, coupled with diversity issues (e.g., race and ethnicity, language and religion, gender and sexual orientation, generation and age, disability nature and demand), offer a myriad of perspectives and ways of living. Accordingly, knowledge of students' family background and structure will help service providers to develop and implement family-centered practices.

Disenfranchised or Resistant Parents

Many service providers are baffled about why culturally diverse parents and families often resist efforts to be involved in the educational process. Several possible explanations may exist. First, many of these parents have had negative, discriminatory, and blatantly stereotypical school experiences. Mistrust of the European culture stems from a longstanding perspective or a recent mishap. Second, family members are cautious about disclosing personal or family matters that might reflect negatively on themselves and the family. Third, some groups view school achievement, failure, and behavior as a reflection on their parenting skills. Fourth, school personnel and school structure intimidate some parents from diverse cultural and linguistic groups. Fifth, parents who have had previous nega-

tive contacts with the school are unlikely to approach school personnel or continue to try and assist the school in working with their children. Sixth, home and school language (i.e., jargon) can contribute to parents' resistance. Seventh, language differences impose communication barriers for some. Eighth, service providers' view of "deficient" parents belittles and promotes a level of discomfort and disrespect. A ninth explanation provided by Lindeman (2001) is that some parents—particularly in immigrant families—do not understand the U.S. school system and its expectations, nor do they have a cultural history of being active, collaborative parents who visit the schools regularly. Other authorities suggest that families may view the meaning of disability and the acceptance of certain behaviors differently and that parents from different cultural backgrounds may have distinctly unique beliefs about schooling (Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Perez-Selles, 2000; Linan-Thompson & Jean, 1997). Therefore, in working with culturally different families, it is useful for school personnel to anticipate that there may be significant differences between the culture of the home and the school and to determine the nature of these differences and how to bridge them.

School Issues

Most parents from culturally diverse backgrounds expect that the school will enable their children to acquire the academic, behavioral, and social skills to be successful in school and the larger society in a culturally responsive manner. Cultural responsibility involves understanding and respecting diversity, creating a culturally relevant environment or atmosphere, implementing relevant instructional methods, and providing culturally sensitive instructional materials. Also indicated is the need to promote collaboration and communication with culturally diverse families and other professionals (Montgomery, 2001). Many students with or at risk for E/BD will face negative experiences requiring teachers and family members to face issues, solve problems, and share strategies together. Students with E/BD are often the last of the disability categories to be placed into inclusive classroom settings (Kea & Treaff, 2000). Because many of these students will be significantly below grade

level academically, general education my be very difficult to master. It will require a strong commitment by school personel to both diverse students and their families to ensure success in adult life.

Cultural Conflicts

Cultural conflicts arise more often when teachers and students do not share similar cultural backgrounds, ethnic identities, value orientations, social protocols, or relational styles (Au, 1993; Boykin, 1986; Sheets & Gay, 1996). Differences in nonverbal communication, behavioral, and interaction styles can create misperceptions (Sanchez, 1999).

Several factors that may contribute to cultural misunderstandings include the following:

- Teachers' lack of cultural knowledge and understanding of the impact of family beliefs, customs, and traditions on students' behavior.
- Failure to recognize methods of childrearing and discipline choices in various cultures.
- Lowered expectations for some students of color (Obiakor, 1999).
- Failure to understand the cultural context in which a behavior is exhibited (Neal, McCray, & Webb-Johnson, 2001).
- Teachers' limited interaction with cultural groups outside their own (Kea & Bacon, 1999).
- Little cultural relevance in the school curriculum (Bowman, 2000) and ineffective instruction (Gay, 1997) that does not incorporate research-based best practices.
- Absence of an ethos of care that supports students' uniqueness.

To help practitioners assess their cultural awareness relative to families, Sileo and Prater (1998) provided a set of questions that address *family dynamics* (e.g., What are the important family rules?), *misperceptions about student behavior* (e.g., What roles do silence, questions, and responses play in the student's culture?), *student characteristics* (e.g., Do students question or obey authority fig-

ures?), and *disciplinary style* (e.g., What are acceptable and unacceptable ways to motivate or change students' behavior based on their perceptions of positive and negative consequences?).

Cross-Cultural Communication

Effective communication among service providers and families begins with relationship building that is trustworthy and fosters family and student confidentiality (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). Next, service providers must understand that families and individuals within culturally diverse groups are diverse themselves. Every family is unique, and both inter- and intracultural variations should be celebrated. However, this complex mosaic often can produce clashes in communication between the school and home. Service providers must take into account that most parents from diverse backgrounds are willing to be involved in the education of their child with E/BD if communication is two-way (i.e., information sharing) and an inviting atmosphere is evident. Initial contact with parents may be accomplished in several ways: telephone, home visits, and written communication. Service providers should determine the family's preferred mode of communication, use full names and/or titles when addressing family members, and treat elders with respect. Parents must be invited to participate, be clearly informed as to how they can assist in their child's learning program and the educational process, and be given the opportunity to understand the relationship between school and family.

Meetings

Many culturally diverse parents are intimidated by the number of personnel who attend meetings and by the educational jargon that is used. To facilitate more positive exchanges, teachers can begin with positive attributes about the student and family—acknowledging the family's structure, educational level, and any existing language barriers. In any case, schools may need to employ translators to facilitate meetings and ensure accurate communication (Parette & Petch-Hogan, 2000). And, teachers need to understand subtle, nonverbal communication that is culture bound. Parents may be

sent meeting agendas and questions prior to conferences or IEP meetings accompanied by follow-up phone calls. Extra time may be needed for initial conferences to promote relationship building and parent participation. Service providers should emphasize parent participation, rather than simply obtaining the signatures needed for documents, during conferences and meetings. They should avoid or limit the use of professional jargon and make sure parents and family members have a clear understanding of what is being communicated. Finally, they should treat parents as trainers and collaborators rather than consent-givers and recipients of information.

Language Factors

Service providers will need to employ special strategies for language minority and immigrant parents. This means, for example, that more frequent and detailed contacts will be needed to explain classroom discipline and homework policies. In addition, letters and notes sent home might be comprised of fewer words and include pictures (Lindeman, 2001), and, if possible, written communications should be in English and the family's native language (Boone, Wolfe, & Schaufler, 1999). Communication systems should be interactive, providing an opportunity for parents to inform and express concerns as well as receive information. Williams and Cartledge (1997) utilized a daily home–school notebook system to afford parents a daily opportunity to voice their point of view and receive teacher information on the schooling of their children.

An additional consideration for linguistically diverse learners is that homework assignments should reinforce previously learned material, not introduce new information that requires parents to deal with unknown material, since some parents may not have the language or teaching ability to help their children with unfamiliar schoolwork. This way, teachers can minimize misunderstandings resulting from differences in cultural backgrounds.

Family Orientation

Service providers today are more cognizant of the need to move away from the so-called cultural deficit model when working with diverse families and students with E/BD. However, they are still

grappling with how to operationalize a strength-oriented perspective. Naturally, this impedes service delivery because culturally diverse families share different views, beliefs, and patterns regarding educational and mental health issues. Families from some cultural backgrounds do not seek outside help for their family or children with E/BD due to (a) language barriers; (b) lack of diverse service professionals to discuss culture-specific issues and concerns; (c) beliefs that services rendered only meet the needs of European American families; (d) lack of accessibility of service delivery systems; and (e) a belief that the goal of many service providers is to disrupt the family and remove the child from the family unit (Cartledge, Kea, & Ida, 2000). Although the type of intervention or treatment proposed is important, more critical is the family's perceptions of their child's and family's needs. Cultural influences play a role in who seeks help as well as the overall effectiveness of services provided to diverse cultural groups.

Conclusion

Service providers can increase positive and collaborative interactions between culturally and linguistically diverse families and schools if the family members are actively involved in all decisions that affect the lives of their children. Authentic family-centered practices will emerge only after service providers have an understanding of families' experiences within their sociocultural context, recognize the families' strengths and resilience, listen to their voices, and establish meaningful relationships with them.

Schools must create caring classrooms that reflect cultural awareness to prevent misunderstandings that result in student misbehavior. Teachers need to become knowledgeable about the cultures of their students' families and reach beyond the school into the home and community of students served to develop sound partnerships. In these ways, teacher can become sensitive to the needs of culturally different students and their families.

In summary, all service providers must be well grounded in their knowledge base of cultural groups and the community being served. We might develop ways to work with diverse families and students with E/BD that (a) embrace and honor the family culture, language, and race; (b) reflect the values and philosophies espoused by different cultural groups; (c) respect and acknowledge the value system of different cultural groups as viable; (d) communicate with immediate and extended family members regularly; (e) assess the family's strengths and needs before developing interventions; and (f) create culturally specific strategies for both families and students with emotional and/or behavioral challenges.

7

A Parent's Perspective

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Schools are critical segments of the "village" that play a major role in determining whether a child's future is bright and hopeful or whether it will be marginalized. We send our children to school to learn and to embrace learning, but often we find that the lessons learned rob them of their dignity. In this chapter, I discuss how the culture of the school can create conditions that unwittingly undermine the potential of a promising student. I contend that ours was not an isolated case but one that exists for many of our students, especially African American males.

As an educator and parent, I was confident that my son and I would have a successful experience in the alternative school where I enrolled him for kindergarten. I did my homework, researching the many elementary schools offering alternative programming in our district, reading their mission statements, talking to parents of current and past students, and visiting the school. I was impressed that the school was described as being highly structured, with a focus on academics and foreign language. These features were important for my son because he is very active and responded better in preschool when there was a lot of structure and warmth.

Kris is a very bright child. He learned his alphabet and numbers at the age of 2½, he is an excellent communicator and is highly motivated. Although Kris was an only child for the first 8 years of his life, he has been in either daycare or preschool since 6 months of age, and therefore I believed he was well prepared for the demands of more formal schooling.

Kris's kindergarten year of school was not uneventful, but he had a very caring African American male teacher who took time to talk with me about Kris's behavior problems and worked with me to set up a behavior plan that addressed them. Mainly, Kris was not able to sit for extended periods of time and got upset easily when corrected. He had a hard time accepting criticism, which I already knew from our lessons at home. A simple stamp on the hand told me that Kris had a good day at school, and no stamp meant the day was rough. If Kris came home 2 consecutive days without a stamp, I met with the teacher to see what was going on and talked with Kris about his behavior. Right away, his teacher was impressed with Kris's academic abilities, awarding Kris "good citizen Francophone" for the first 2 months for his excellence in the use of French. Kris made the honor roll all four grading periods and received a number of academic awards at the end of the school year.

In my opinion, several factors contributed to Kris's successful kindergarten year. First, his teacher had a healthy understanding of and appreciation for male behavior. He welcomed, for example, Kris's energy and zest for learning. When Kris excitedly waved his hand, energetically moved his body, or even shouted out answers, the teacher celebrated his enthusiasm, accepting his behavior as being characteristic of boys rather than indicative of a serious behavior problem. Second, he was skilled in managing Kris's behavior in constructive and positive ways, acknowledging Kris's feelings when needed and proceeding to discuss alternative, more appropriate behaviors. Third, he avoided power struggles. When Kris was noncompliant, he softly asked Kris to comply with his directive and then walked away, which gave Kris time to calm himself. The teacher believed this strategy worked because he observed it was taking less time for Kris to turn his behavior around. If Kris was

particularly difficult, the teacher would exclude him from the group and advise him that he would be able to return when he was ready to follow the rules. Kris hated to be removed from the group, so this brief time-out was quite effective.

Finally, his teacher was dutiful and consistent in communicating with me about Kris's academic performance and behavioral difficulties. To me, this was a key factor in Kris's successful schooling. The relationship Kris and I enjoy makes it easy for me to reinforce good school behavior with relatively simple daily events such as just having a cup of hot chocolate with him before bed.

After a fairly successful kindergarten year and having a great relationship with his teacher, my husband and I did not hesitate to send Kris back to this school for first grade. We were not disappointed. Kris's first grade teacher, a French native, was just as structured and warm as his previous teacher. Especially important, she was receptive to devising and implementing positive behavior interventions. For example, we again set up a daily behavior plan because of Kris's inability to sit still. Due to an increasingly competitive nature and the negative influences of some of his classmates, Kris began to show more anger about being corrected and did not like it when the teacher marked a problem wrong. To counter this response, his teacher would use strategies such as telling Kris how well he did but that he missed the hardest one on the page. This seemed to satisfy him enough to look at his mistake and refrain from responding inappropriately, which normally was pouting. The teacher also capitalized on Kris's strengths, noting how sensitive he was and the pride he took in his work. She respected his feelings and often told him how smart he was, saying "Bravo Kris!"

At that point, we were relatively unconcerned about Kris's schooling. The reinforcement given at home and at school was enough to make Kris want to behave and follow the school rules. His teacher really liked Kris, often giving him hugs, which he would report to me when he came home. Again, Kris received awards for excellent French and was on the honor roll for each of the grading periods that school year. His teacher often paired Kris with other children so that Kris could both assist them with their work and occupy his

time. Otherwise, because he usually finished before the other students, he would move around the class and talk. Kris was never perceived as a discipline problem; rather, his behavior was annoying and needed to be managed by a team consisting of the teacher, the principal, and myself.

In summary, Kris's first 2 years of school were quite successful. His teachers praised him for showing appropriate behavior and tried to teach him alternative behaviors when he displayed deficits. They were delighted with his level of motivation—the pride that he took in his ability to learn and to do high-quality work. They saw his flashes of anger as a reflection of his perfectionistic tendencies and disappointment with himself rather than as acts of disrespect toward his teachers. They tried to redirect him to engage in more constructive, socially appropriate behavior. Both teachers avoided power struggles with Kris by telling him his options and giving him time to make good decisions in a private way. They were consistent in sending daily reports home in the form of a stamp or sticker. Each teacher took the time to get to know Kris and respected him as an individual.

Unfortunately, during second grade several changes occurred that started a downward spiral for Kris and me. First, the principal, with whom I had a great relationship, was reassigned to a different building. For me, his tenure as principal had been marked by special human characteristics such as spending time to get to know the children and showing a genuine concern for their welfare. When Kris was too excited to explain what happened and the teacher did not have time to listen, for example, the principal would listen and give corrective feedback. Kris greatly respected this principal and never wanted to disappoint him. The principal not only recognized Kris's hypersensitive personality, but also realized that when children are most emotional they are least rational. Children like Kris needed more time and more understanding.

A second problem that occurred this year pertained to class assignments, which had not been made according to teacher recommendations of students who were incompatible or who influenced each

other negatively. Kris had the misfortune of being assigned to a class with several boys who proved to be poor models.

Finally, Kris's teacher, a white female, seemed to be unfamiliar with and indifferent to the backgrounds of most of the students in her class. The school year began with an introductory evening visit for the parents and students to meet the teacher. During this visit, I felt the teacher was not very responsive to my offer of assistance, nor did she appreciate my suggestion for some type of daily report. I wanted her to know that in the past, frequent communication helped to keep Kris's behavior under control. I decided that the evening was probably just as stressful for her, and once we got to know each other we would work well together.

Unfortunately, that expectation never materialized. Kris's school behavior was deteriorating, I was getting many more negative reports, and I began to realize the effects the experience was having on Kris's behavior and school performance. I found myself punishing my son more and more, at one point pulling him from all his after-school activities and spanking him for behaviors being reported by the school. I also noticed that he began to camouflage his abilities, not wanting others to see him as smart. In addition, he seemed to be quick to interpret ambiguous situations as threatening and to respond to them with verbal aggression. Kris displayed more anger and hostility toward his teacher. He began hiding notes she would send home and constantly talked about running away.

I remember one morning, sitting on the sofa with him while we both cried. He was crying about not wanting to go to school because his teacher didn't like him, and I was crying because I didn't know how to help him. All my knowledge and skills for teaching him alternative behaviors and working closely with the teacher were failing. I went immediately to the new principal, discussed the changes I saw in my son and requested that he switch Kris to another classroom. He assured me he would look into the matter, noting that Kris's grades were excellent and stated, "We don't want him to end up like some of those other boys." I took this to mean that those boys, who weren't performing well academically, weren't expected to be successful.

This experience and my graduate studies have led me to ponder how schools unintentionally promote maladaptive behaviors in students. Some of the factors that appear to impact children like my African American son include (a) cultural misconceptions of student behaviors, (b) inadequate and inconsistent classroom management, (c) poor or nonexistent home–school communication, and (d) gender bias.

Cultural Misconceptions of Student Behaviors

Kris was constantly removed from the classroom for various offenses, such as shouting out answers, fighting with peers, being out of his seat, and being disrespectful to adults. Often, my husband and I walked into the school to find Kris in the office or in-school suspension. As I have noted, Kris has a difficult time keeping still. He has been identified as being hyperactive, but I refuse to medicate him because he is manageable. Kris's previous teachers tended to use traditional, passive teaching strategies, expecting students to sit quietly for extended periods while they lectured, attended to individual students, or performed various managerial tasks. A major teacher complaint was that Kris refused to give other children an opportunity to respond, while Kris complained that the teacher never called on him. According to Kris, he would wait several minutes for the right answer, then he would shout it out, the teacher would yell at him, and he would become angry with the teacher. A more viable instructional approach would be active student responding (ASR), which maximizes academic learning time and increases academic performances (Heward, 2000). This method utilizes devices such as response cards and choral responding so all students can respond simultaneously, they can respond at high rates, and teachers can readily assess the performance of the entire group. Classrooms that keep students responding to academic materials are most appropriate for students like Kris.

Another example was that Kris and a few other boys were frequently given in-school suspension because the teacher viewed the boys' verbal sparring as fighting rather than joking around, as they

defined it. Furthermore, she considered them—especially Kris—as being defiant when she looked at them and they didn't stop. The teacher was not very explicit in labeling Kris's wrongdoing. On one occasion, when I requested specifics so that I could offer Kris alternative behaviors, the teacher replied, "He knows what he did." I explained to her that since I am visually impaired, I do not use facial expressions or general statements, but I am very direct so there are no misunderstandings. She later stated to Kris, "Your mother may buy that you don't understand, but I know you do." According to the literature, these are prime examples of cultural discontinuities wherein differences between the child's background and the culture of the school lead to an escalation of problems and decline in academic performance (e.g., Cartledge & Milburn, 1995; Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 1990).

Delpit (1995) pointed out that students are vulnerable for being labeled as having emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD) when they fail to understand the veiled requests and social codes of the school. To further illustrate, many times, his teachers would pose the directive in a manner that Kris perceived as a choice. For example, "Kris don't you think you need to sit down?" Well, if he thought he needed to sit down, he probably would not have gotten up. Instead, she needed to say, "Kris, I want you to sit down and don't get up." This type of request not only gives him the specific behavior you want from him, but also indicates that there are no options. Without the direct statements, the undesired behavior continues and he gets yelled at and embarrassed in front of his friends. I noticed that he used the phrase "I don't care" increasingly as a way to cover up his feelings. He would get angry not only for himself, but for other students as well, especially if a friend of his was sent to the office for what he says was "for nothing."

Inadequate and Inconsistent Management of Behaviors

Often, his third- and fourth-grade teachers complained that Kris did not follow the rules. Although, according to Kris, other students

were doing the same thing, the teachers' explanation to Kris was that he should worry about himself. Seeing that a teacher did not correct all students who misbehaved and tended to focus on the boys, Kris believed that she was "picking" on him and the other boys. He expressed his anger by refusing to stay "in sync" with the group on the class activity but would work ahead, further angering the teacher, which, in turn, resulted in additional reprimands or punishment.

There were many classroom inconsistencies that negatively affected Kris's attitude, academic performance, and behavior. He lashed out verbally, stating he did not care when the teacher tried to redirect him. I tried to assist the teacher by providing her with instructional resources and specific strategies such as minimizing transition time and making direct requests. These efforts failed, partly because the teacher put the suggested strategies in place only for a few days before she abandoned them.

Kris's third-grade teacher was an excellent academic teacher. She recognized his unusual abilities and put him in a small group with other, similar students to do advanced assignments. He was on the honor roll for three of the grading periods, but at the fourth period she decided to penalize him for his behavior through his grades. I suggested that, rather than penalize the students for their behaviors, she first try to teach them the social skills she felt were lacking. Her response was that she had other important proficiency requirements and that really wasn't her job.

The examples described in this chapter are mirrored in classrooms throughout the country and underscore the tremendous need for teacher skill in behavior management, particularly in urban settings with students from diverse backgrounds (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Poor Home–School Communication

Unlike the previous years, when communication was ongoing and fairly positive, it began to break down in the third grade and wors-

ened in the fourth grade. Toward the end of the third grade, in apparent frustration, if not desperation, the teacher began recording things other students told her that went on in areas outside the classroom that she did not observe. This infuriated Kris, especially since the main "reporter" was a student adversary, and Kris denied much of what he said. Thus, these reports from school were not useful.

At the beginning of his fourth-grade year, I purposely did not meet the teacher until the second month of school. This planned "laying off," was prompted by (a) the miserable experiences of the previous 2 years and (b) a general feeling communicated by the school personnel that perhaps I was trying to present Kris as superior to the other students. About a month after my initial inquiry to her about the lack of homework, she began to call me about Kris's misbehavior: his laughing at classmates when she corrected them and displays of disrespect when she corrected him. I suggested that we begin some sort of daily or weekly communication because, since she had not called, I was unaware of any problems. She felt this was unnecessary and that Kris should be able to handle himself. I then asked whether I could drop in from time to time, to check on Kris's progress. She agreed, and these observations revealed limited order in terms of classroom management and a style of reprimanding students through public embarrassment. The students hated it; and, for Kris, it set off a conflict cycle wherein he would try to retaliate by not doing his work, which would only bring on more reprimands and humiliation.

Gender Bias

It is well documented that males—particularly African American males—are singled out more often for disciplinary actions than females (e.g., Carmen, 1990; Claiborne, 1999; Irvine, 1990; Pauken & Daniel, 2000). But, I did not notice much gender bias until the fourth grade. Kris consistently complained that the teacher reprimanded the boys for behaviors engaged in by both the girls and boys. I talked to her, and she told me that the boys cause more prob-

lems than the girls do and that Kris needed to worry about himself. During one particular afternoon, Kris was talking and the teacher who served as the writing facilitator threatened to call me about it. The regular fourth-grade teacher stated in front of the class that the other teacher should call me because Kris's mother believes that everything is the teacher's fault and that Kris is an angel. This greatly upset Kris because he felt that the teacher was disrespecting me. He did not do well the first 9 weeks, and I decided I had to make a change in order to save my son.

Conclusion

As I reflect over my son's formal schooling, what becomes most prominent is that, in spite of his good abilities and other strengths, he was subjected to a constant barrage of punitive, demoralizing experiences. Instead of positive interventions to capitalize on his strengths and to teach for skill deficits, these negative experiences were breaking his spirit and robbing him of his sense of self-worth. The power of teaching goes far beyond getting a child to decode a word or compute a problem. The first grade teacher's willingness to use Kris as a tutor, for example, kept him busy, out of trouble, and affirmed. I write this chapter with the hope that we can begin to help teachers better understand the critical role and responsibilities they have in the lives of children and youths. Behavior deficits do not reside totally within the child, and we have a major part in capitalizing on the child's strengths so that he might maximize his schooling and later life experiences.

8

Final Thoughts

Gwendolyn Cartledge

In the preceding chapters, my colleagues and I have attempted to provide a more complete picture of the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students with emotional or behavioral disorders (E/BD). Together, we have sought to better inform current practices for students of diversity and disability. Along with the thoughts of experts from around the country, we learned first hand from a culturally diverse parent about some of the challenges facing children and youths with disabilities when caregivers lack the cultural competency and sensitivity that are essential to provide quality instruction. We trust that the perspectives of researchers, teacher educators, and practitioners, as well as the experiences shared by a parent, can push the field forward so that we can better serve an important but neglected segment of the student population in our schools.

Service providers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners with or at risk for E/BD need to become culturally competent to serve these students most effectively. Culturally based social behaviors may be misperceived as behavioral disorders, or behavioral disorders may be obscured by cultural misperceptions. Professionals who are well versed in cultural knowledge can effectively employ instruments and practices that can more accurately identify and prescribe educational services for children of color. Equally, if not

more, important to service delivery is the ability to engage the families of these children in the schooling process and to provide effective instruction that leads to academic and social growth. These are minimal expectations, and, to achieve these goals, service providers must acquire the cultural competence that will enable them to avoid stereotypes, to interpret the child's behavior within a cultural context, and to devise positive, proactive strategies for the child and his family, capitalizing on strengths rather than stressing deficits.

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